

## ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE (ETS)

Most of the homes and places frequented by the youth interviewed do not have anti smoking rules within their premises; almost 1 in every 5 and 1 in every 3 students said they were around others who smoke in their homes and other places (other than their homes) respectively, in a week prior to the interview.

The efforts to protect non-smokers from the health effects of passive smoking are not being supported by the government, that is, at the policy level.

The government parries frequent appeals by CAMA to ban tobacco smoking in public. It (the government) contends that the move would be detrimental to the already ailing economy of the country.

" Government is looking for alternative (main export product) for tobacco, but it cannot just ban tobacco now" said Anthony Livuza, then the Chief Information Officer (Ministry of Information) - reported by *The Nation* on July 2, 2001.

Nonetheless, some few service providers have banned /restrict smoking in or around their premises.<sup>5</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- (1) Intensification of education and awareness campaigns especially to the rural areas, where most youth in the country reside and where majority of them are ignorant of the risks associated with the use of tobacco products/ ETS. There is need for full involvement of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, NGO's, religious and traditional authorities for the campaigns to be more effective.
- (2) Although considerable levels of tobacco related issues are currently discussed in Schools, comments on the content or intensity of the lessons given cannot be Made. It is therefore, recommended that further research be pursued in this area and that tobacco control must be incorporated in the school curricular. And also, since a significant proportion of the youth start smoking at the age of 10 (or less), there is need for tobacco control education to be introduced at an early age, possibly at school inception and that parents and guardians must involved be in the campaign.
- (3) Lobbying for anti tobacco legislation, which will regulate marketing and distribution of tobacco products and ban tobacco advertisements and tobacco sponsorship to sports. It would be useful to monitor how the tobacco industry adapt its strategies to induce young people into smoking so that appropriate Counteractions should be developed.

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<sup>5</sup> Smoking is for example not allowed in bank halls, supermarkets, public transport (taxis, buses, ferries etc) and at Petroleum Filling Stations.

- (4) Formulate public policies and enact and enforce tobacco control legislation that would prevent the youth from buying tobacco products and tobacco trade.
- (5) Training of media personnel on how to effectively inform and educate the public, more especially the youth, on issues pertaining to tobacco use.
- (6) In order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of tobacco prevalence among the youth in the country, the survey needs to be repeatedly done (possibly once or twice a decade), should be conducted in good number of districts in all the three regions of the country and should also be expanded to the youth who are not school goers.<sup>6</sup>

In sum, the study revealed rampant and ravaging use of tobacco among the youth in the country. It is therefore, imperative that all possible expedient actions be taken to redress the situation that can be addressed by a good tobacco control legislation and policy.

## **APPENDIX 1: WEIGHTING, VARIANCE ESTIMATION AND STATISTICAL TESTING**

School, classroom and students data were weighed to produce total population estimates. The weighting factors reflect the probability of selection, non-response, and post-stratification (gender and school class). Variances were estimated using the general linear variance estimators. This method of computing variances takes into account the complex nature of the design and the classroom cluster effect. It also accounts for sampling with the probability proportional to measure size. Epi info was used to compute standard errors for the estimates.

A percent and its estimated standard error may be used to construct confidence intervals (CI) about the percent. The CI is expressed as a range (upper and lower bound) around the percent. The CI range contains the average value of the percent which result is all possible samples were produced. The 95%CI suggests that if 100 samples were drawn and CIs were calculated for each, then the average value of the percent would be contained in 95 of the 100 CIs.

The test of statistical significance is done by comparing the 95% CI for two percentages. If the CIs do not overlap then the percentages are significantly different. If they overlap, then there is no statistical difference between the percentages.

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<sup>6</sup> A number of young people in Malawi, because of massive poverty and/or AIDS epidemic; do not go to school e.g. street kids.